

11-15-2011

Faculty Recital: The Music of David Maslanka

Kimberly McCoul Risinger, Flute

Paul Nolen, Saxophone

Patricia Foltz, Piano

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Recommended Citation

McCoul Risinger,, Kimberly Flute; Nolen,, Paul Saxophone; and Foltz,, Patricia Piano, "Faculty Recital: The Music of David Maslanka" (2011). *School of Music Programs*. 68.
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Simple words clearly spoken bear and convey the full weight of the poet's lifetime of experience. I am very attracted to this thought.

I have borrowed lines from six of Merwin's poems as titles for my "songs without words" for flute and piano. Without the context of the complete poems these lines can only offer a fleeting suggestion of a feeling, mood, or condition of being. The music offers its own wordless parallel of these impressions, each piece a dream of a dream.

The title of the whole piece, and of the fifth song, "...and I am a child before there are words..." comes from the poem *Still Morning*:

It appears now that there is only one
age and it knows
nothing of age as the birds know
nothing of the air they are flying through
or of the day that bears them up
through themselves
and I am a child before there are words
arms are holding me up in a shadow
voices murmur in a shadow
as I watch one patch of sunlight moving
across the green carpet
in a building
gone long ago and all the voices
silent and each word they say in that time
silent now
while I go on seeing the patch of sunlight

"...and I am a child before there are words..." was written for, and is dedicated to, two of my dearest musical friends, Kimberly McCoul Risinger and Allison Brewster Franzetti.

—David Maslanka

Illinois State University
College of Fine Arts
School of Music

Charles W. Bolen Faculty Recital Series

The Music of David Maslanka

Kimberly McCoul Risinger, *Flute*

Paul Nolen, *Saxophone*

Patricia Foltz, *Piano*

Kemp Recital Hall
November 15, 2011
Tuesday Evening
8:00 p.m.

This is the seventieth program of the 2011-2012 season.

Program

Please turn off cell phones and pagers for the duration of the concert. Thank you.

Tone Studies for Alto Saxophone and Piano

- No. 1 Jordan
- No. 2 Credo in unum Deum
- No. 3 Watch the Night With Me (Part 1)
- No. 4 Watch the Night With Me (Part 2)
- No. 5 Wie bist du, Seele (Soul, how have you become so unhappy?)
- No. 6 Whale Story (O Sacred Head Now Wounded)

...and I am a child before there are words...

Six Songs for Flute and Piano (2011)

World Premiere

1. ...and the unbroken sound of pure darkness...
2. ...from her hands a scent of almonds rises...
3. the dead are not separate from the living
4. ...where the rooms of the dark are already known...
5. ...and I am a child before there are words...
6. Let me imagine that we will come again when we want to and it will be spring

Program Notes

Tone Studies was commissioned by Joseph and Janet Lulloff for their son Jordan.

Note to the performers:

The title “Tone Studies” says very little about what is actually in the music. I chose it because each movement offers a large number of choices about quality of sound, choices that will continue to unfold over time. Each study is a small and passionate essay – a “short story” without words.

Four of the six studies make reference to chorale melodies:

No. 1: Christ, Unser Herr, zum Jordan kam
Christ our Lord came to the river Jordan

No. 2: Credo in unum Deum
We believe in one God

No. 5: Wie bist du, Seele
Soul, how have you become so unhappy?

No. 6: O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden
O Sacred Head Now Wounded

The original melodies can all be found in the 371 Four-Part Chorales by J.S. Bach. The sixth study has the title “Whale Story.” I wrote a very brief story that should be read aloud as part of any performance. It can be read aloud by the soloist, or by someone other than the performer. The text is in both the score and part. Duration: ca. 25’

The poetry of W.S. Merwin has spoken to me very deeply. As of writing (2011), Merwin is in his 80s, and his 2009 book *The Shadow of Sirius* is a powerful work. Major themes of the book are memory and the nature of time. In the poem *Worn words* he writes:

The late poems are the ones
I turn to first now...
...it is the late poems
that are made of words
that have come the whole way
they have been there